

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AGR-20 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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SUBJECT: GDR AGRICULTURE IN 1973: A GOOD YEAR

REF: A. BERLIN 1231

B. BERLIN A-259, SEPT, 1, 1972

1. SUMMARY. GOOD QUALITY OF THIS YEAR'S CROPS PLUS
REDUCED SPOILAGE AND WASTAGE Owing TO BOTH FAVORABLE
WEATHER AND IMPROVED ORGANIZATION OF HARVEST COULD
RAISE AVAILABLE DOMESTIC SUPPLIES ABOVE 1972 LEVEL.
GDR IMPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES, HOWEVER,
WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE AT CLOSE TO LAST YEAR'S
QUANTITIES PARTLY DUE TO INCREASED MEAT PRODUCTION TARGETS
AND LARGER LIVESTOCK INVENTORIES. END SUMMARY.

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2. DESPITE A PROLONGED DRY SPELL IN LATE SPRING/EARLY SUMMER, GRAIN AND GROUND CROPS DEVELOPED WELL AND 1973 HARVEST THEREFORE PROMISES TO BE SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN ANTICIPATED IN REFTEL. SOME CONCERN BECAME EVIDENT IN GDR PRESS WHEN GRAIN CROPS APPARENTLY MATURED VIRTUALLY SIMULTANEOUSLY. HOWEVER, NEAR-IDEAL WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING HARVEST, PLUS POSSIBLY MORE EFFICIENT UTILIZATION OF MANPOWER, EQUIPMENT AND STORAGE FACILITIES, APPARENTLY HAS FACILITATED GATHERING OF VIRTUALLY ALL GRAIN CROPS WITH MINIMUM OF LOSS FROM WASTAGE AND SPOILAGE.

3. MISSION'S ESTIMATES FOR 1973 PRODUCTION (IN MILLIONS OF TONS) OF VARIOUS CROPS FOLLOW (COMPARABLE 1972 DATA IN PARENTHESES):

GRAINS: 8.0 - 8.3 (8.54)
POTATOES: 11.5 - 11.8 (12.14)
SUGAR BEETS: 7.1 - 7.3 (7.22)
OIL-SEEDS: 0.25 (0.24)

4. FOREGOING ESTIMATES BASED ON FOLLOWING ASSUMED YIELD PROSPECTS (DECITONS PER HECTARE) AND PLANTED AREAS (IN MILLION HECTARES):

YIELD PROSPECTS	PLANTED AREAS
GRAINS: 34.5- 35.5 (36.6)	2.32 (2.33)
POTATOES: 180.0 - 185.0 (187.8)	0.64 (0.65)
SUGAR BEETS: 315.0 - 325.0 (325.9)	0.23 (0.22)
OIL-SEEDS: 20.0 - 20.5 (20.4)	0.12 (0.12)

5. ALTHOUGH WE ESTIMATE 1973 GRAIN PRODUCTION AT JUST UNDER LAST YEAR'S RECORD LEVEL, NET GRAIN AVAILABLE FOR DIRECT HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR OTHER USES MAY BE HIGHER. FIGURE FOR 1972 WAS UNDOUBTEDLY INFLATED, PERHAPS BY AS MUCH AS TEN PERCENT, DUE TO HIGH MOISTURE CONTENT OF HARVESTED GRAIN. MOISTURE CONTENT OF THIS YEAR'S GRAIN CROPS REPORTEDLY AVERAGES 17 PERCENT, NECESSITATING LITTLE IF ANY DRYING PRIOR TO STORAGE.

6. OUR ESTIMATE FOR POTATO PRODUCTION IS BASED ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAST YIELD INFO AND THEREFORE MODEST. HOWEVER, IT MAY BE TOO LOW IF GDR HAS MADE PROGRESS IN CLOSING SUBSTANTIAL YIELD GAP BETWEEN ITSELF AND FRG.

7. SUGAR BEET ACREAGE HAS INCREASED FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR. PRODUCTION SHOULD THEREFORE AT A MINIMUM REACH LAST YEAR'S RECORD LEVEL. HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, TOTAL PRODUCTION MIGHT BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER IF GDR

WAS SUCCESSFUL IN BRINGING YIELD CLOSER TO THAT IN FRG.

8. SIZE OF OIL-SEED CROP (WHICH IN GDR CONSISTS ALMOST ENTIRELY--AS MUCH AS 95 PERCENT--OF RAPE-SEED) MAY SURPASS THAT OF 1972 AND COULD, PROVIDED ACREAGE WAS EXPANDED AS IN PREVIOUS THREE YEARS, APPROACH RECORD LEVELS OF 1967-8.

9. DEFINITIVE AND MORE COMPLETE GDR DATA ON HARVEST WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL LATER IN YEAR. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN IF HARVEST IS CONFIRMED AS BEING AS SATISFACTORY AS OUR PREDICTIONS, GDR IMPORTS OF GRAINS AND FOODSTUFFS SHOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE AT OR SLIGHTLY ABOVE LAST YEAR'S LEVELS. GRAIN NEEDS FOR DIRECT HUMAN CONSUMPTION ARE NOT EXPECTED TO RISE SIGNIFICANTLY, BUT COMMITMENT OF REGIME TO IMPROVED DIET FOR POPULATION WILL MAKE NECESSARY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CONVERSION INTO ANIMAL PROTEIN, ESPECIALLY IF CONTINUED STRESS IS PLACED ON INCREASED BEEF PRODUCTION FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION. DEPENDING ON COST, GDR MAY ALSO IMPORT ADDITIONAL FEED GRAIN TO EXPAND ITS CURRENT PRODUCTION OF BEEF FOR EXPORT. KLEIN

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